

## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

STORK AND RAPTOR MIGRATION IN SOUTH NYANZA, KENYA During the morning of 17 March 1981, just to the south of Homa Bay, South Nyanza, Kenya (0°28'S, 34°27' E), we watched a large scale migration of storks and raptors.

At 10:15 hrs, a lucky glance at the sky overhead revealed four dense flocks making use of thermal currents, totalling at least 2500 birds. One huge circling mass alone contained an estimated 1000 individuals.

The birds were predominantly White Storks *Ciconia ciconia*, accompanied by very subordinate numbers of other species. Afrotropical storks were represented by a separate flock of 90 Abdim's *Ciconia abdimii*, and a stragglng group of four Open-billed Storks *Anastomus lamelligerus*.

Raptors were seen at first moving singly or in loose groups, and included one Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*, two Lesser Spotted Eagles *A. pomarina*, one Steppe Eagle *A. nipalensis*, and a total of 20 Steppe Buzzards *Buteo buteo vulpinus*. In addition to these ungrouped birds, a flock in a thermal over us at 10:35 hrs contained singles of Lesser Spotted Eagle, Wahlberg's Eagle *A. wahlbergi*, Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*, Steppe Buzzard and Honey Buzzard *Pernis api-vorus*. It is quite possible that we missed other raptors within or associated with the large soaring masses of storks, and our counts in general must be considered minima. We may have missed the start of the passage, for on the following morning, which was similarly hot and sunny, we noted at nearby Rongo that Black Kites *Milvus migrans* started using the thermals at 09:30 hrs, so that we could have missed the initial 30-45 min of the previous day's movement.

The birds had moved on out of sight by 10:40 hrs, although occasional Wahlberg's Eagles and Steppe Buzzards were still in the vicinity around 11:00 hrs. Three other parties of birds seen later on the same day were probably also associated with this northwards movement. Later in the morning, about 16 km south of the above sightings, two Hobbies *Falco subbuteo* were moving north together. In the afternoon, about 15 km west of Migori (1°04'S, 34°28' E), separate groups of 70 and 700 Abdim's Storks were soaring in thermals.

These migrants may well have been grounded while on passage the previous day by heavy rain in and to the south of the Homa Bay area. With the exception of the two afternoon flocks of Abdim's Storks, they were all drifting steadily to the north-northeast, presumably about to pass over the narrow Winam Gulf. The path that they were taking was thus parallel to, and just to the west of, the Tarime-Wire Hill-Ng'iya line, which Britton (1980) notes as an established migration route for Steppe Buzzards.

Britton & Britton (1976) and Britton (1980) record northwards migration of White and Abdim's Storks around the eastern edge of Lake Victoria in spring, but in maximum flocks of only 700 and 250 individuals respectively; P.L. Britton (pers. comm.) considers the numbers reported here to be exceptional.

There appear to be no previous definitive Nyanza records of Lesser Spotted Eagle or Honey Buzzard; Booted Eagle and Steppe Eagle occur on passage in Nyanza only rarely (Backhurst et al. 1973, Britton & Britton 1976, Britton 1980).

## REFERENCE

BRITTON, H.A. & BRITTON, P.L. 1976. Records section (Birds). *EANHS Bulletin* 1976: 52-61.

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